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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1683  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1475  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3585  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1231  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2100  
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 0485  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [EMIN](#) [ENRG](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: PAPUA -- U.S. REPRESENTATIVE'S VISIT

REF: A. JAKARTA 3100

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 3076

[1](#)C. JAKARTA 3015

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[1](#)1. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified -- Please handle accordingly.

[1](#)2. (SBU) SUMMARY: Congressman Faleomavaega--accompanied by the Ambassador--visited Papua, November 26-28. He met a wide range of government officials and civil society figures in Biak and Manokwari, and toured U.S. firm Freeport's mining operations in Timika. Faleomavaega voiced strong support for Special Autonomy and for Papua Governor Suebu's development plans. He also praised Freeport's efforts to train and employ Papuans, and to minimize the environmental impact of its operations. Press coverage of the visit noted that the Congressman reiterated his support for President Yudhoyono's commitment to the region. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)3. (SBU) U.S. Representative Eni Faleomavaega (D American Samoa) visited Biak (an island off Papua), Manokwari (the capital of West Papua), and Timika (the center of Freeport-McMoran's copper and gold mining operations). The Congressman had requested permission to visit Papua from Nov. 26-30 but the Indonesian Government approved a visit from Nov. 26-28. On security grounds, the GOI denied his request to visit Jayapura, the capital of Papua Province, and arranged for Jayapura-based interlocutors to meet the Congressman in Biak. (Note: December 1 is a politically sensitive day in Papua and the GOI had security concerns about a visit during this timeframe.) Ambassador Hume accompanied the Congressman on the visit along with two Congressional staffers and two DEPLU officials.

IN BIAK

[1](#)4. (SBU) The Indonesian government arranged the visit to Biak with security procedures similar to a presidential visit, according to one DEPLU official. The Congressman's delegation proceeded to a secluded government compound behind several rings of security for a meeting with Papuan civil

society figures and legislators, chaired by Governor Barasbas Suebu.

15. (SBU) Governor Suebu explained that while Special Autonomy offered the best mechanism to resolve the "tug of war between Jakarta and Papua," it has yet been fully implemented. Money was not a problem as the central government has transferred USD 2 billion to the provincial government for FY 2007-8. The key challenges, according to Suebu, remain increasing the capacity of the provincial government to use that funding to implement the Governor's development plans. Accounting, budgeting, and program monitoring were areas where the provincial government needed particular help.

16. (SBU) Congressman Faleomavaega stressed his deep personal connection to Papua and explained that some of his ancestors were Samoan missionaries who were buried in Papua. He agreed that Special Autonomy was the best way forward and praised President Yudhoyono's commitment to making it work. He also urged support for Governor Suebu's efforts and said the USG was looking for ways to support his administration. Special Autonomy must, however, begin to show tangible results or else support for the arrangement will wane, Faleomavaega explained. Noting the role of Congress in appropriating money for the USG, Faleomavaega pledged to look for ways to support the Papuan provincial government. He pointed to education as the highest priority and said it was the "salvation of the Papuan people".

17. (SBU) Chairman of the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP) Agus Alua echoed similar themes, adding that the recent Presidential Instruction on the accelerated economic development of Papua provided more specific guidance on how to generate economic benefits for the Papuan people. He also stressed the need for the MRP--the one institution charged with looking after the culture and welfare of the Papuan

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people--to play a greater role in governing Papua.

18. (SBU) Amungme traditional leader Tom Beanal struck a somewhat different note. (Note: The Amungme are the ethnic group that dominate the area around Freeport's mining operations.) He charged that the voice of the Papuan people has never been heard: "We demanded independence and they gave us Special Autonomy." Beanal called on the U.S., UN and others to support Papuans' "desire for a new dialogue with Jakarta." Faleomavaega responded that Papuans have had opportunities to have their voice heard. He continued that Papua now had a directly elected governor and an elected legislature. Papuans, like other Indonesians, also had the opportunity to choose their President through direct election. These electoral leaders were moving forward with Special Autonomy as a way to realize the aspirations of the Papuan people.

19. (SBU) Following the official meeting, Faleomavaega met with a crowd of approximately 150 ordinary Papuans. Wading into the crowd, he was greeted with a traditional Papuan ceremony and, together with a local minister, he led the group in a brief prayer.

MANOKWARI STOP

110. (SBU) The team then proceeded to Manokwari. DEPLU officials informed the delegation after arrival in the city, the capital of West Papua Province, that Governor Abraham Atururi was out of the country. The resulting abbreviated meeting with the Vice Governor and other local officials consisted of an overview of basic facts about the province--demographics, geography and economics. There was little opportunity for substantive exchange, especially given the need to leave on schedule for a flight to Timika.

111. (SBU) Following the meeting, the delegation's motorcade

passed several hundred Papuan protesters at various locations enroute to the airport. Many were carrying banners claiming that Special Autonomy had failed and calling for a referendum on Papua's status within Indonesia. Several protesters also carried the "Morning Star" flag, a widely recognized symbol of Papuan independence. The delegation encountered more protesters at the airport and managed to depart just minutes before protesters broke through a police line and surged onto the runway, blocking planes from taking off. Based on Mission's direct observations, Indonesian police at the scene went out of their way to ensure that there was no violence and we heard of no complaints of heavy-handedness by security forces throughout the trip.

WITH FREEPORT

¶12. (SBU) After Manokwari, Faleomavaega's delegation toured Freeport's operations in Timika. Freeport officials briefed the Congressman on their efforts to recruit, train and employ Papuans. This included a tour of the Nemangkawi Mining Institute, a Freeport facility where several hundred Papuans are enrolled in a three-year course teaching highly-skilled mining and other business trades. Freeport officials also provided an overview of its environmental programs, including a tour of the mine tailings reclamation area. He also met with a number of Freeport's senior Papuan employees. However, bad weather prevented the delegation from visiting the Grasberg mine in the highlands, as originally scheduled.

¶13. (SBU) In response to Freeport's briefing and tour, the Congressman stated: "People in America don't know about all the good you are doing. You have to do a better job telling your story." He praised Freeport as the source of over USD 5 billion investment in Papua and the provider of over 18,000 jobs. He also noted the positive economic impact of Freeport's operations, which he considered an excellent model for how an American company can do business overseas.

¶14. (U) Congressman Faleomavaega gave us permission to send this message. He said he did not need to clear on it.

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HUME